



MINORITY AND/OR WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

COORDINATOR'S CONNECTION

SUMMER 2008

A Step in the Right Direction: Statewide Uniform Certification

It's been a long journey, but we finally made it. In August of 2007, the NC General Assembly passed Senate Bill 320 which authorizes the Secretary of Administration to develop and administer statewide uniform certification for all historically underutilized businesses that seek to do business with state and local government. The amendment to Chapter 143 of the NC General Statutes will allow M/WBE firms to undergo one certification process that will be applicable to the vast majority of government entities. Passage comes after years of advocacy by M/WBE stakeholder groups such as the Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) and the NC M/WBE Coordinator's Network. It is a moment we should be proud of; North Carolina is the first in the country to offer such a program.

According to a study done by the Terry Sanford Institute of Policy at Duke University, uniform certification will address the key problem evident with the current disaggregated system: the need for multiple certifications leading to redundancy in time and effort. Minority and women-owned firms will no longer need to complete multiple certification applications with varying standards and requirements. Prime contractors and administrative partners who currently do not certify their own vendors will enjoy the convenience of utilizing one database. Moreover, state and municipal officials can breathe a sigh of relief as a uniform system increases the time available for business development efforts. Coordinators and liaisons will be spending more time connecting firms with opportunities as opposed to handling paperwork.

Certification requirements are important to ensuring services targeted to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses reach this group. These services are designed to address disparity in the participation of M/WBE/HUB firms in purchase and contract opportunities.

Two caveats for local government certification include the City of Charlotte which operates a race neutral program and the City of Durham which injects size and net worth requirements similar to the US Small Business Administration (SBA). Firms who would like to certify with Charlotte will need to complete a separate process whereas firms seeking Durham business will complete a supplemental application form. Federal programs associated with the SBA and the Department of Transportation (DOT) will continue to operate under their own standards.

Roll-out of the new process is scheduled for July 2009. To view a copy of the proposed guidelines for uniform certification, visit the HUB website at <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/hub/>.

Upcoming Business Development Training & Workshops

July 15	<u>Getting the Loan You Need</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
July 17	<u>Keys to Starting a Successful Business</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
July 21	<u>Beginning QuickBooks</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
July 22	<u>How to Conduct Market Research</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
July 24	<u>How to Finance Your Business</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
July 29	<u>Business Telephone Etiquette</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
August 5	<u>Changing No to Yes with Sales Skills</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
August 6	<u>Introduction to Business</u> Small Business Technology & Development Center ECU, Willis Building 5:30PM-7:30PM
August 7	<u>Franchising, Buying, Starting from Scratch?</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
August 14	<u>Writing Your Business Plan</u> PCC Small Business Center 6:00PM-9:00PM
August 21	<u>Becoming a General Contractor</u> <u>Information Session</u> Greenville City Hall 5:30PM-7:00PM

NOTE: Classes are free; Registration is required

New Certification Procedures

Beginning July 1, 2008, the City of Greenville and Greenville Utilities will begin certifying new vendors through the NC Department of Administration's Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB). This procedural change is made in efforts to ramp up for the new uniform certification process effective July 2009.

In order to become certified, firms are asked to visit <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/hub> and click on "Programs/Core Services" and "Certification" to access the online registration. Be sure to have your email address on hand as a current email is necessary for registration. Following certification with HUB, firms may submit a copy of their HUB certification letter along with a "Company Profile" available on the City of Greenville website to complete

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CITY OF GREENVILLE, NC



A Message from the Coordinator...



In the wake of North Carolina's extraordinary move to standardize the certification process, M/WBE owners, advocates, counselors, and partners have an opportunity to reflect—to reflect on the journey that has brought us to this point but also believe in the hope of a better economic future. Disparity, particularly economic disparity, has characterized the landscape of American society for centuries, leading to nationwide differences in access to capital, financing, and social and business networks. For these reasons and others, Latinos and African Americans are anywhere from 40%-60% less likely to own a business and women lag behind men in ownership when looking at the same ethnic or racial group (Small Business Administration, 2007). As a result of a public interest supported by data, legislation created the mandate for M/WBE/HUB programs across the state to promote equal opportunity for participation in public contracting and procurement.

Since this time, M/WBE/HUB programs and spin-off business development centers have worked diligently to reach parity, a goal at times, elusive, and at others, seemingly futile. However, it is moments like this that give rise to hope for progress and a better economic future for all. The fruit of combined labor has produced over 81,000 minority-owned businesses in North Carolina in 2002 which earned \$9.4 billion in sales and receipts. Women-owned businesses continue to grow in number with almost 174,000 in North Carolina in

2002, earning \$26.7 billion in sales and receipts (Survey of Business Owners, 2002). These businesses create a multiplying economic impact through job creation, tax revenue, and competitiveness in the market, contributing to the overall prosperity of the state.

As we look forward, we anticipate the ever-changing, increasingly global market which puts new demands on all business owners, including minority and women-owned. We also pay attention to the shift towards a green economy, giving rise to new opportunities and adaptations of the old. Always adapting, always improving, the life of a business owner is never dull. Concurrently, the work to continue breaking down barriers and increasing opportunity is never stagnant. Advocates continue to develop new ways to bring more entrepreneurial talent onto the field, particularly African American which has the least participation among minority groups; development specialists seek innovative means to cultivate and expand the talent which already exists. And, advocates persevere in the fight to initiate legislation, and more importantly, empower through education to change behavior. Looking back to press forward....it's time to get back to work.

contact Denisha at

252.329.4862 or dharris@greenvillenc.gov

The East Carolina Connection...

Introducing the HUB Office

As some of you may or may not know, East Carolina University also offers a program for Minority and Women-owned businesses as well as other Historically Underutilized Businesses known as the HUB program. HUB programs may be found at UNC Campuses all across the state with the commitment to ensure and promote equal and increased opportunities for the design and construction community. Donna Lewis-Mayo is the East Carolina HUB Liaison Officer. Through outreach programs, identification, and recruitment efforts, Donna assists businesses in becoming registered with the University and in learning more about business opportunities.

For an application and to view current opportunities, visit the Facilities Engineering and Architectural Services website at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-admin/campus_operations/facilities_engineering_and_architectural_services/Index.cfm

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Donna.



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Desire + Discipline: Ingredients for Success

Written across classroom bulletin boards around the country and handed down as sage advice at countless graduations are popular proverbs for success, designed to instill hope and inspiration to achieve the best. Some well worn adages include: "Reach for the moon...even if you miss, you'll land among the stars" and "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." Though beautiful and fitting, these words fall short of painting the complete picture of what it takes to accomplish all that we dream. Desire is not enough. Success is the result of persistent desire transformed into sheer discipline.

Bobby Griffin, Assistant Director for Contracts in the Department of Materials Management at ECU had this point driven home at the *Black Enterprise 2008 Entrepreneurs Conference + Expo* held in Charlotte, NC in May of this year. The Conference, hosted by General Motors, is a play ground for the nation's power players in the business field. Each year, over 1,500 entrepreneurs and corporate executives come to network and capture business opportunities.

Also apart of the networking event are seminars and presentations attuned to the business climate, particularly the minority business environment. Griffin found particularly noteworthy the topic of entrepreneurial success which rests on hard work and strong business principles. One presenter noted that while there are many self help programs offered by the private sector, the State, Counties and local government, the mind set of an entrepreneur must focus on good business principles and a strong desire to succeed. Programs are established to ensure that the barriers to participation are largely decreased while providing the development tools and technical assistance to ensure that companies can adequately compete on the same playing field. However, the rules are still the same. Listed below are a few mentioned during the presentation:

Rule #1: Be knowledgeable about goods and services

Rule #2: Develop a business plan targeted towards your market

Rule #3: Establish upfront revenue streams to fund opportunities

Rule #4: Become educated on the private and

governmental system of procurement, and local business as well

Rule #5: Communicate; Network and Market, Market and Market

Rule #6: Be true to yourself and the customer served, repeated business comes from a job well done

Rule #7: Know your competition and their pricing methods

These and others go a long way towards achieving the ultimate goal of success. Thanks to all the Entrepreneurs who are making it happen.

Getting in the Know: Doing Business with Government

As large public agencies with diverse procurement and contracting needs, there are several opportunities for doing business with the City of Greenville and Greenville Utilities, ranging from large construction to supplies and materials. In looking at fiscal year-end 2007 expenditures not including personnel, the City spent approximately \$18M whereas Greenville Utilities spent approximately \$210.5M to carry out its four main enterprises: Electric, Water, Wastewater, and Natural Gas. How to participate in these opportunities was the topic of our second quarterly business development workshop, "How to do Business with the City & GUC."

The workshop held on May 22nd in City Hall provided a blueprint on how we conduct business, walking those in attendance from notification to award. Specific topics included how to locate government opportunities and enroll in the process, requirements for bid submissions, and marketing tips for making the pitch and sealing the deal. Many took away a greater understanding of how important it is to know your audience. With government, it is necessary to be the lowest responsive, responsible bidder with consideration to quality and other deliverables specific to the bid or quote solicited. Something as simple as not delivering bids in the appropriate method or being late to the bid opening will kick your firm out of the running.

Workshops like this are held every quarter and are free and open to the public. If you would like a copy of the step-by-step handbook and/or more information concerning the "How to do Business" workshop, feel free to contact the M/WBE office.

5 tips on Preparing for Change

- Examine your corporate culture to discover any impediments to change. Some traditions and practices may need to be revamped to meet new needs.
- Keep talking about change so that employees think in terms of change and help make it happen.
- Make expectations clear. Key employees should know that embracing change is part of their responsibility.
- Monitor company procedures and systems to be sure they support change.
- Plan far ahead for the biggest change of all: your retirement or exit from the company. Develop new leadership

Brought to you by SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business."



"Putting Our Words to Work."

- Electronic Notification of Upcoming Bid Opportunities
- Business Locator in M/WBE Directory
- Business Development & Technical Assistance
- Quarterly Newsletter with the Latest Information

For more information, contact: Denisha Harris, M/WBE Coordinator at 252.329.4862 dharris@greenvillenc.gov.

Check out our information on the City's website, www.greenvillenc.gov under the Financial Services' Purchasing Division.

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the City/GUC certification process. Firms will then be listed in the M/WBE Directory and become privy to the benefits of membership in the M/WBE program.

As a result of this change, firms will have exposure to much of the new required information and documentation under Statewide Uniform Certification. Firms will have the added bonus of receiving bid opportunities through the State office. As always, it is not a requirement to become certified in order to do business with the City or GUC but it is strongly encouraged.

Welcome to the New M/WBE's

- Bristel Landscaping (Grifton)
- Bristel Landscaping & Seeding (Greenville)
- Hilliard Lawn Maintenance, Inc (Nashville)
- J and B Janitorial Services (Greenville)
- Jasper Fire & Safety (Cove City)
- Langley's Lawn Care (Greenville)
- Nick's Maintenance (Pollocksville)

It is the policy of the City of Greenville and Greenville Utilities Commission to provide minorities and women equal opportunity for participating in all aspects of the City's and Utilities' contracting and procurement programs, including but not limited to, construction projects, supplies and materials purchases, and professional and personal service contracts.

Have you ever thought about obtaining a General Contractor's License but were unsure of what it took to pass the exam? Have you taken the exam once or several times and not been able to pass?

The City of Greenville and Greenville Utilities will be hosting an **information session** with Michael Boney of Boney Contractor Seminars to learn more about his services to help individuals successfully pass the NC exam. Boney has a demonstrated success rate of 85% for those who take his 1.5 day seminar and then take the exam. He has hosted sessions at the University of Wilmington and other institutions with great response.

August 21 • 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Greenville City Hall • 200 West Fifth St.

Come join us to learn more about his services and how they can help you take your business to the next level!



To RSVP, please contact Denisha Harris at 252.329.4862 or dharris@greenvillenc.gov

Becoming a General Contractor

Are you interested in taking your construction business to the next level? Are you ready for a new challenge that has the potential to reap great rewards? If you answered these questions in the affirmative, you may want to think about becoming a general contractor.

General contractors act as managers, coordinating construction for entire projects. They are responsible for hiring the necessary subcontractors including electricians, plumbers, and other needed specialists to complete the job on time and on budget. Successful contractors hire skilled, quality subcontractors that produce a quality product that keep customers coming back again and again. And for government work, do so at a low price.

One of the greatest incentives for becoming a general contractor is the ability to bid on projects of \$30,000 and above, a requirement according to the NC General Statute.

In order to become a general contractor, one must pass the NC General Contractor's Licensure Exam issued by the North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors. The Board issues several types of contractor licenses including building, residential, highway, public utilities, and specialty. Specialty contractor licenses include all areas from water and sewer works to railroad construction. Within these categories are limited, intermediate, or unlimited licenses which designate the dollar amount threshold per project that a contractor may bid on. This designation is based upon the available working capital of the company represented. The cost per exam is \$60.

To find out more information concerning the GC license and examination requirements, visit <http://nclbgc.org> and download a Candidate Information Bulletin available in PDF format.

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